Between the Keys

A Publication of the JALT Materials Writers SIG

From the Editor

Eric Lerstrom

Welcome to the final issues of Between the Keys for 2013.

There have been a few changes to the Materials Writers SIG since the SIG Meeting at JALT2013 in Kobe. Jim Smiley has become the Web Coordinator. Additionally it was decided to make an assistant position to each of the positions. One of the Assistant Publications Chair positions has been filled by new member Victoria Solis, and the Assistant Programs Chair has been filled by Jim Smiley. We are currently looking for people who are interested in helping out in the SIG, so if you have an urge to help out, just sent Nate an email.

The featured article this issue "So you want to publish an EFL textbook?" was written by our main speaker at JALT2013 Todd Jay Leonard. In this article he talks about his experiences in publishing in Japan and breaks down the different perspectives that you should take into account when thinking about getting your own text published.

In "A learner-centered approach to curriculum design," Neil Heffernan and Michael Delve discuss creating a new general English program at Ehime University. It is an interesting look at the process of creating a new program.

From Andrew Reimann comes the article "Teachers as Writers." Here he writes about creating, developing, and publishing teacher created materials using simple and effective means. It is filled with practical information, step-by-step processes, and advice.

We have one My Share article this issue. Richard Miles has written an article about teaching presentations in the classroom.

Finally, in "Language-in-Education Policies and MEXT-approved EFL Textbooks in the New Corse of Study," Gregory Paul Glassgow and Daniel Leigh Paller look at the new MEXT English curriculum and how those changes have, and have not, been reflected in the current textbooks. They examine the relationship between teaching materials and the policy making process.

MW-SIG Web Site   http://www.materialswriters.org

The site contains articles on topics ranging from copyright to desktop publishing techniques, an extensive list of publishers - including contact information, tutorials and software recommendations, and information on submission requirements for *Between the Keys*.

MW-SIG Mailing List   mw-sig@materialwriters.org

Submission Guidelines

NEXT DEADLINE: February 15th

Between the Keys (BtK) welcomes submissions in English on all topics related to the development of pedagogic materials. Between the Keys is distributed online both in HTML and PDF formats. We gladly review articles for publication from anyone, however priority for publication will be given to current members of the JALT MW-SIG. We invite any interested person to submit articles of the following types:
• main research articles for vetting team inclusion (between 2000-4000 words)*
• research articles for inclusion at the editor's discretion (1500-3000 words). Longer articles may be divided into sections and published in subsequent issues.
• perspective/opinion pieces (up to 1000 words)
• book reviews (up to 1000 words)
• annotated bibliographies
• short summaries/reviews of journal articles
• responses to BtK articles
• descriptions/reviews of websites related to pedagogic materials development
• letters to the editor
• My Share-type articles showing materials in use
• interviews with materials-related writers, publishers, academics

• reviews of materials-related technology for upcoming issues.

*BtK is not a refereed publication on the whole. However, one article per issue will be. This is to improve the quality of materials development research and to further promote individual author's careers. Main article submissions must follow our Submission Guidelines.

Publication Schedule & Deadlines
Between the Keys is published three times a year, in:

• March (volume one),
• August (volume two)
• and December (volume three).

Submissions for consideration for any issue should be received by the editor by the 15th of the month prior to publication at the latest, i.e. February 15, July 15 and November 15.

Most articles will be published at the discretion of the editor except for refereed main articles, which will be reviewed by the MW-SIG vetting committee. If you wish your article to be our Main Article, please indicate so in your cover letter.

You can consult the BtK archive

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to compare your article for general style, length and appropriacy.

Articles are available to members only for the two years after publication and open access afterwards. The copyright statement is: "All articles contained in Between the Keys © 2012 by their respective authors. This newsletter © 2012 by Materials Writers SIG."

This means that individual authors are free to disseminate their own works on, for example, their websites and in open access repositories, but that must be limited to their own article only and not the whole publication.

Furthermore, copyright for the formatting and layout belong to the Materials Writers SIG, and so any content that is published outside must not be a copy of the BtK article but only the text.

Submissions Process
• Send an email to publications @ materialswriters.org (take spaces out) with your article attached
• Send an email to publications @ materialswriters.org stating your intention to submit before the next deadline. This is very useful in planning the next issue.
• If the document includes graphics, drawings, etc., they should be save as separate files and sent as e-mail attachments.

If you are unsure of the format to use, please ask the Layout Editor: layout @ materialswriters.org
Editor Contact Information: publications@materialswriters.org

Questions?
Anyone with questions can reach the editor at the email address above.

Introduction

It seems that nearly every person who is associated with Japan or who has spent any amount of time here at all—whether professionally or socially—wants to put his or her experiences onto paper in the form of some sort of publication. Those who find themselves teaching English especially get the itch to write the perfect textbook that will become a runaway bestseller which will then allow them to retire early to while away their days on a tropical beach, writing even more bestsellers.

In fact, teachers often lament that there is no "perfect" textbook on the market for their particular situation or need. So, one alternative to remedy this perennial problem is to write your own textbook. And this is basically how I got started publishing in the *English as a Foreign Language* (EFL) market in Japan—I could never find that all encompassing perfect textbook for the course I was teaching…so I wrote my own.

Over the past couple of decades I have enjoyed much success in authoring textbooks for the Japanese EFL market. During this period of time, I have also been approached by a number of potential authors wanting advice on how to break into the Japanese EFL market. The following article summarizes a presentation I made at the annual *JALT Conference 2013— October 25-28* (held in Kobe, at the Portopia Hotel). I was happy to impart some of the wisdom I have learned over the years to help budding textbook writers break into the market.

There are a number of perspectives which need to be considered before putting pen to paper. First and foremost, it is necessary to take into consideration the "publisher's" needs and expectations at that moment. The EFL market is constantly changing and what is trendy today maybe outdated tomorrow. Then there is the "editorial" perspective which, although related, is quite separate from what the publisher expects. The editors really do wield much power and

influence within publishing houses, so knowing what they want will make for smoother sailing when presenting the initial proposal. Next, is the "salesperson's" view; s/he is in the trenches and really knows what the market is dictating. After all, the salesperson will be the one to promote the book and actually to sell it, so knowing the market's strong selling points will help in the writing of the textbook. Finally, there is the author's perspective. Unfortunately, this is the least important of all the components that go into getting a proposal for a book accepted because EFL textbooks are largely for commercial use and business is business. If you have your heart set on writing something more high-brow—academic and scholarly—then EFL textbook writing in Japan is not for you.

My Experience with "EFL Publishing"
When I first arrived to Japan back in 1989, the EFL market had few titles and the selection was dismal. Computers, along with the prospect of desktop publishing were in their infancy; my first few titles were typed on an electric typewriter and then sent by mail to a typesetter to be put into book form. Needless to say, this created a host of problems, not least of which was the fact that the person doing the typesetting had no knowledge of the English language usually, so often things were approximated. Editing and correcting mis-

takes was tedious and painstaking work, indeed.

As an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) on the *Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program* in rural Aomori prefecture, I had the great fortune to meet a professor who had a publishing connection; the company he worked with was desperate to publish a cross-cultural reader on American culture. They wanted a "real" American who could write essays with vocabulary building activities that Japanese professors could use as textbooks in their classes. This was my first textbook.

Having a connection will help you get your foot in the door, which is essential in the Japanese publishing industry. Sending unsolicited proposals often do not receive any type of response. Over the years, I have built relationships with a number of Japanese publishing companies, having published titles with *Kenkyusha, Seibido, Kinseido, Taishukan, Sanseido,* and *Macmillan Languagehouse*. Nearly all of these were from making acquaintances at conferences and befriending the salespeople who came knocking on my university office door.

The following tips, I hope, will help you get started in the EFL publishing industry.

Publisher's Perspective
> *Know what's hot and what's not!*
> English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is trendy now, as are reading books. Many publishers have inundated (and thus

exhausted) the market with too many similar conversation/speaking books; the decreasing market share cannot support all of the current titles.

Less flash and more substance!

ELT textbook publishers are interested in strong but simple books without costing too much to produce. Why? The Japanese ESL/EFL market is continuing to shrink due to the falling birthrate; it is difficult to recoup their investment and make a profit.

Digitized books are the wave of the future…

The industry is changing rapidly and ELT publishers are looking seriously into publishing more digital-based formats. Digital could very well replace paper-based books in the future.

Publishers looking to expand their primary areas…

Publishers are looking for projects that can double as self-study or trade books, in addition to traditional English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks. This is a result of the shrinking market, as well, and companies are actively looking for ways to expand their sales.

Editorial Perspective

Know your target market!

Who are the key competitors? What titles on the market can your book go up against and be adopted by teachers? A popular myth is that you write a book for students—WRONG—you write it for the instructor and hope he/she will adopt it. Students have no say, really, in the selection of textbooks.

The book needs to be fresh and interesting

This goes without saying, really, but the market is always looking for something new that will catch the eye of teachers who may decide to adopt it. A number of years ago, this was including a CD with the textbook; this has largely been replaced by publisher-website downloads for students and teachers. Any extra supplementary material that the author can offer to accompany the book is welcomed by publishers. This becomes a selling point by having extra ideas/material/activities that are downloadable for the teacher…and supplementary exercises for the students.

Easy to teach/use

Often authors will use a certain formula or technique in

their classrooms and just love it…thinking that it is the best method possible. Unfortunately, these can often be convoluted and difficult to execute for other teachers. It is important that the book is easy to use and easy to teach. Teachers don't have time for developing complicated preps outside of class. They want it to be straightforward and time efficient.

Appealing to the eye

Not only the cover should be striking and appealing—which authors really don't have too much say in the design except sometimes to offer ideas and then to sign off on it once the designers have it ready—but the actual page layout of material needs to have a certain appeal to the eye. Illustrations are often a key reason why a text is adopted as opposed to one which is not.

Not too dense, but balanced

The average language class in Japanese universities is 90 minutes. Teachers (especially native-Japanese instructors) like to finish one lesson during that time-period. Too much material will cause the teacher to rush through it. Not enough material will bore the students and the teacher. Always pilot your material with-

in your own classes to see how easily grasped the material is for the students and how much time each activity requires on average. Of course each class will be different, with varying levels of comprehension and understanding, but you need to gauge it in the middle to not leave the lower level students behind, but make it interesting enough for the higher level students so they do not get bored. Basically, have a formula and stick with it!

Level is important: Beginner? Intermediate? Advanced?

Editors become so frustrated with authors who start out with a low-intermediate proposal, but end up with a super-advanced book by the last lesson. Many authors get the level flat-out wrong.

Do your research and look at other titles on the market—not to copy but to get an idea of the different levels and how these progress gradually throughout the entire book. Also, think about the amount of text on a page; if the left-hand is text-heavy, then the right-hand page needs to balance that with less text and perhaps exercises that are laconic, short answer, or multiple-choice…and a related illus-

tration to tie the material together visually. Especially in Japan, illustrations are key components and can make and break a book—I call it the "kawaii" factor.

You have 1 chance to make your proposal count! Don't blow it!

Submit at least three lessons/units/chapters and a table of contents with your proposal. Keep your explanation short and sharp. Do not write a thesis explaining all the theory and pedagogy you used to come up with the exercises and activities. Publishers receive many, many proposals each year and only accept a handful. They do not have the time to read through pages upon pages of notes and explanations. If your stuff is good, the pedagogy will be evident. These people are professionals and know what will work and what won't… usually. Take your time on the three lessons you submit. Make them count.

Don't get discouraged if your proposal is turned down…

If you submit a proposal to one publisher and it is rejected, it could be because they already have another title which is too similar and would compete against a book they already have in their catalogue.

This is nothing against your own book's idea necessarily, so don't take it personally. Each publisher has a certain number of titles they like to produce each year, and their quota may be used up. Tweak it and resubmit it to another publisher—after doing your homework to make sure it is a title that would complement their catalogue.

Salesperson Perspective

There must be a need in the market for the proposed book.

This point is crucial. Publishers want to make money and salespeople want to sell books. If there is a hole in the current titles available for a particular area, publishers and salespeople will be more apt to adopt it because there is a clear need in the market.

Also, be kind to your salespeople when they come knocking on your office door laden with sample copies. Accept their books and catalogues. Pick their brains as they are on the frontlines and really know what the market trends are and can give you the best initial advice.

As the author, you need to pilot the book in your classes which is a part of the market (show feedback, progress, success, etc).

The textbook needs to have clear goals—teachers are busy and would prefer to spend time teaching content rather than teaching how to use the text; salespeople do not want to have to teach the teacher how to teach the text.

Length of the textbook is very important. Many times textbook proposals come in way too long. The reason is that potential authors often have many great ideas and have trouble self-editing.

The proposed textbook needs to show a consistent level throughout all the units. It is a tricky balance—the text needs to show some kind of level increase from Unit 1 – Unit 12, but can't have too much of a jump or teachers will not adopt it.

Consistency is an important component—without consistency, the text can be a salesperson's nightmare (as well as the editor's) as it can look too confusing.

Many potential authors have great lessons that suit their classes and needs, but it has to transfer to the wider community of ELT teachers and meet their classroom needs as well.

The Author's Perspective
Don't love your copy too much!

So often, potential authors think every comma, adverb, preposition and adjective is integral to the book. Allow the editor to edit and take any criticism in stride. It his his/her duty to make sure the textbook is the best it can possibly be before it hits the market. Usually, editors have much experience and knowhow in what the market is dictating and what difficulty levels are appropriate.

In addition, the "fresh eyes" perspective is essential when writing a textbook. Have a colleague or friend who is in the business look at it to offer you a fresh perspective. So often, after reading and re-reading a particular section, even mistakes begin to look correct. Another set of eyes can sometimes find these glaring typos, misspellings and subject/verb agreement issues that you consistently have missed while trying to self-edit. Also, lay it aside for

a few days and look at it yourself with a renewed sense of "fresh eyes." You'll be amazed at what you will need to correct or change!

Be open to suggestions and changes.
Have thick skin and take criticism constructively. Authors can be temperamental about their work sometimes, and much of it might end up edited out in the final version. The point is you want the book to be the best it can be. Don't take suggestions for changes personally as an attack against your work or writing ability.

Befriend your salesperson: Ask him/her what is needed in the current market.
As mentioned earlier, cold proposals sent, unsolicited, often don't even receive a response. However, if you have a business card from a salesperson, e-mail him/her and develop a relationship; when your proposal is ready, you will already have one of the proverbial feet in the door. This is so essential in Japanese publishing—*nemawashi*—or some type of personal connection with a person on the inside.

A word of warning! Be careful sharing your ideas <u>too</u> widely, initially, as the market is very competitive (and although rare, someone can take your idea, develop it, and have it in published form while you are still trying to decide the proposal).

Seeing your own creative work in book-form is so exciting and one way to make your regular job seem more worthwhile and satisfying. Take the time to make a proposal that is well organized, current, and pedagogical in scope. Get to know the area by reading up on current methodologies and by surveying what the market is offering at the moment. And finally, don't be discouraged if your proposal is rejected. With some tweaking and reorganizing, it could be that bestseller that will make you a household name in the English language teaching field in Japan. Good luck!

About the Author
Todd Jay Leonard, a longtime resident of Japan, lives, writes and teaches in Kyushu where he is a professor at Fukuoka University of Education. He has published extensively in academic journals, magazines, and newspapers in the areas of education, spirituality, American religious history, cross-cultural understanding, and English as a Foreign Language. He is the author of twenty books.

BOOKS BY TODD JAY LEONARD

Crossing Cultures—America and Japan (Kenkyusha, 1992)

Extra! Extra! Read All About It!—Contemporary English through Newspaper Articles (Kinseido, 1994)

Team-Teaching Together—A Bilingual Resource Handbook for JTEs and AETs (Taishukan, 1994)

Talk, Talk: American-Style (Macmillan Languagehouse, 1996)

Words to Write By—Developing Writing Skills through Quotations (Macmillan Languagehouse, 1997)

The Better Half—Exploring the Changing Roles of Men and Women with Current Newspaper Articles (Macmillan Languagehouse, 1997)

East Meets West: An American in Japan (Kenkyusha, 1998)

East Meets West: Problems and Solutions—Understanding Misunderstandings between JTEs and ALTs (Taishukan, 1999)

Trendy Traditions: A Cross-Cultural Skills-Based Reader of Essays on the United States (Macmillan Languagehouse, 2002)

Business as Usual: An Integrated Approach to Learning English (Seibido, 2003)

Letters Home: Musings of an American Expatriate Living in Japan (iUniverse, 2003)

Words of Inspiration: A Self-Diviniation and Healing Method for Awakening your Spiritual-Intuitive Side Using Playing Cards (iUniverse, 2003)

Orbit: English Reading (Sanseido, 2004)

Talking to the Other Side: A History of Modern Spiritualism and Mediumship—A Study of the Religion, Science, Philosophy and Mediums that Encompass this American-Made Religion (iUniverse, 2005)

Orbit: English Reading [New Revised Edition] (Sanseido, 2007)

Talk, Talk: American-Style—Meeting People [Revised, Book One] (Macmillan Languagehouse, 2008)

Talk, Talk: American-Style—Going Places [Revised, Book Two] (Macmillan Languagehouse, 2008)

An Indiana Hoosier in Lord Tsugaru's Court—Musings of an American Expatriate Living in Rural Japan (iUniverse, 2009)

American Traditions—A Cross-Cultural Skills-Based Reader of Essays on American Symbols, Traditions and Superstitions (Macmillan Languagehouse, 2010)

British Traditions—A Reader of Essays on the UK (Macmillan Languagehouse, 2011)

A learner-centered approach

to curriculum design:

Creating and implementing a general English

program at a Japanese University.

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Introduction

In 2008, the English Education Center (EEC) at Ehime University – a national Japanese university in southwestern Japan – set out to revamp its English program in order to tailor to the specific needs of its approximately 2,000 first-year students. This reinvention took a four-pronged approach: For the eight permanent faculty members to work in teams to create a reading, a writing, a speaking and a listening textbook; to make a common test for these macro skills; to implement a comprehensive e-learning program; and to initiate an "English Professional Course" catering to advanced-level second to fourth year students. All four elements were imposed after the results of research indicated that first-year students at the university desired a more tailored approach to their English language learning. The purpose of this article is to describe the origins of the program, to outline the details of the curriculum, and to reflect on the successes and failures of this project since its inception.

The discussion will focus on three of the components mentioned above: the creation of four textbooks, and of a test for each class that uses the textbooks, and of the aforementioned English Professional Course. Predictably, creating a new English program based on the needs of 2000 students was a huge undertaking. The process involved putting together the framework for a successful English language curriculum: taking steps to plan, create and publish textbooks for the program, creating a testing program that fairly gauges the learning outcomes of all first-year students studying English at the university, and creating courses tailored to the future needs of high-level English language learning students.

Background

The EEC teaches General Education English classes to approximately 2,000 first-year students every year. In the first semester, speaking and listening classes are taught, while writing and reading classes are the focus in the second semester. Unless students are given a special exemption due to a high score on the TOEIC, TOEFL or IELTS, all of these classes are a mandatory part of their first-year education at the university. The EEC teaches to all six faculties at the university: Education, Agriculture, Science, Engineering, Medicine and Law and Letters. The average language level of first-year students at Ehime University is around 350 on the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), but this average varies between faculties.

In 2008, with the needs of these students firmly in mind, the eight permanent faculty members at the EEC were tasked with conducting a needs analysis in order to determine exactly what our students were interested in learning in their first-year English language classes. The results of an extensive research project yielded valuable information for the faculty members, and the following process was set in motion.

We will discuss the three most important elements of this program below, outlining them in the order in which they occurred.

Textbook creation

The first step of this process was to design a textbook for each of the four macroskill-themed classes: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. This was done over a period of three years – and as of November, 2013 – all are in use at the university and also for sale on the general Japanese textbook market. These textbooks are sold to our students at a discounted rate and the authors receive no royalties for textbooks sold at Ehime University.

The textbooks were created after conducting a needs analysis of Ehime University students. This involved surveying all 2,000 first-year students as to their interests and needs when learning English. As a result, a set of "Can-Do" lists for each skill was created. The "Can-Do" lists were compiled in 2008 after analyzing the data from the students' responses to questionnaires asking exactly what they wanted and expected from their English language studies. From this, a team of between two and four authors set out to write a textbook that matched the components of the "Can-Do" lists, but more importantly, that matched the needs and wants of the learners at the university. The resulting textbooks cover topics such as those listed in Table 1.

The process of writing these textbooks in line with the results of the student questionnaires proved to be challenging for the team members. Each author had differing ideas into what material should be included in each unit. As a result, through a pro-

Table 1
Outline of textbooks in use at Ehime University, Japan

Listening: Understanding conversations on the telephone; making plans for everyday arrangements; understanding weather reports; using everyday complaints and requests (Blight, Tanaka & McCarthy, 2010).

Reading: Reading: the environment; different cultures; technology; traveling abroad (Murphy, Heffernan & Hiromori, 2011).

Speaking: Introducing yourself to others, daily life; likes and dislikes; talking on the telephone; events that left an impression (Stafford et. al., 2010).

Writing: Paragraph writing: hometowns; stating one's opinion; introducing Japanese culture; and studying abroad (Stafford, 2013).

cess of trial-and-error, we ended up giving one member of each team the title of coordinator. This person essentially oversaw the whole process and ensured that all of the content in the textbooks was written in a uniform style that would best suit the learning needs of students at Ehime University.

Once the textbooks were completed, the major publishers in Japan were contacted about taking on the project. Since our institution could guarantee approximately 2,000 sales annually, we had quite a few interested publishers willing to sign a contract with us. We eventually signed a contract with Cengage Publishing for two of the textbooks and Kinseido Publishing for the other two. Then, an initial three-year contract was signed with each publisher, with the option of extending the deal on a yearly basis after that.

The testing program
The next step in the process of crafting an inclusive curriculum was to make a common test for all first-year students taking each of the four first-year classes. There are currently four distinct Listening and Reading tests, and a specific rubric focussing on the syllabus in use for the Speaking and Writing classes. The Listening tests consist of 50 multiple-choice questions based on the skills, themes and vocabulary of each unit of the textbook. Two types of scripts are on each recording: short conversations between two people, and one announcement or lecture. The first version of the Listening test was piloted with 908 first-year students in the spring of the 2009-2010 academic year, and subsequently revised and updated. All four versions were recorded professionally at a studio in Tokyo. The EEC received funding from

the university for this project, thus allowing us to spare no expense in the making of the listening test. The result is a professionally sounding and looking test that all first-year students take at the end of each semester.

The Reading test consists of 30 questions based on short texts: advertisements, recipes, notices, schedules, and other types of questions that can be found on the TOEIC. Question types include scanning, skimming, inference, summarizing, guessing meaning and understanding basic discourse structure: all of which are covered during the 15-week course during the second semester of each academic year. The first version of the Reading test was piloted in October of 2010 with 807 students. The full version of the Reading test was administered for the third time in February, 2013 with 1,622 students.

Similarly, the creators of the Speaking and Writing tests created a rubric for each test based on the curriculum and the textbooks for each class (see Stafford, 2013; Stafford et al., 2010). These tests have remained basically the same as when they were created in 2010, with some minor changes to each of the rubrics to make them more user-friendly for the teachers of these classes.

The English Professional Course

The third step in the process involved creating an "English Professional Course" program designed for students in their 2nd-4th years of study at the university, with a TOEIC score of at least 450. Each year, 30 students are chosen from approximately 80 applicants. They are chosen based on their past English experience, an English essay written on why they want to enter the program, their TOEIC score, and a face-to-face interview. Students are required to complete four compulsory courses: Writing Workshop, Effective English Presentations, Oral Communication, and Speaking and Reading Strategies. The students are also required to choose four more classes from a choice of eight: TOEIC Experience, Business English, Discussion Skills, Writing Strategies, Academic Reading, Introductory Interpretation, English for Tourism and International English Experience. The course is offered to students in the Professional Course in both the first and second semesters of each academic year. Each class runs for 90 minutes and for 15 weeks in a semester. A distinct focus of each of these classes is instilling the English language skills that students will need for their futures upon graduating from university.

A final element to the English Professional Course is a study-abroad option that allows students to go to the University of Hawaii for three weeks to study English and stay with a homestay family. This program is partly subsidized by the university.

Results of the program

To date, the program outlined in this paper has been extremely successful;

so much so that other universities in Japan have been enquiring into the program with the intention of setting up similar programs. First, the textbooks in use have been useful for our purposes: they suit both the needs of our learners and of the General Education curriculum. Second, the tests have proven to be an effective measure of our students' progress in the four courses taught to first-year students. Lastly, the English Professional Program saw its first set of graduates in the spring of 2013: a group of 27 students successfully finished the eight required courses and received recognition from Ehime University for doing so.

The success of a program of this type largely depends on the work put into it: this program was conceptualized in the spring of 2008 and has been a constant project for the eight permanent faculty members at the university. Having said that, the results are in and they are positive: student outcomes and satisfaction – determined by the results from the common testing program in place and regular questionnaires distributed to students throughout the semester – demonstrate a high satisfaction with the English language program at Ehime University.

Future plans

With the program described here in its fourth full year of operation, the faculty at the university plans to further develop the program in three ways: i) to either continue to use the textbooks in their current form or to either revise them or write/choose a new textbook for our learners. There are inherent problems in either approach, as we may need to start from scratch and conduct a new, updated needs analysis. This is obviously a time-consuming endeavor; one that will test the mettle of all of the faculty members; ii) continue to develop the common tests for each of the courses at the university. This will involve revising the four current versions of both the Listening and Reading tests so that they are the most reliable and valid measures of our students' abilities and achievements; iii) to expand the English Professional Course to include more study-abroad options for students to go to American, Canadian, British and Australian universities. A further expansion of the English Professional Course may also include adding more courses to the existing twelve on offer for the 2nd-4th year students at the university. However, this will depend on student demand for such courses and faculty availability to teach them.

Conclusion

The program outlined here has been extremely successful to date. However, there is no doubting the amount of work that constantly goes into ensuring its success. The faculty members at the university are pleased at the results that have been accrued, but are also concerned about the way forward in the future: Should we con-

tinue on the same path, or start all over again? These are dilemmas that any aspiring materials writer must face, and come part-and-parcel with the process of designing a quality curriculum that will have positive benefits for our English language learners' experience at university.

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MW SIG Officers 2013/2014

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Teachers as Writers

Andrew Reimann

Utsunomiya University

Introduction

The following will describe methods and techniques for creating, developing and publishing teacher produced EFL materials. Creating a textbook need not be a daunting task. In the age of digital content and information technology, printed works are becoming increasingly endangered and unfeasible. This description will highlight simple effective and affordable means to producing, publishing and distributing teacher created materials. Outlining a step by step process, practical information, strategies and techniques which will allow teachers to professionally produce and market their own materials. In conclusion, some resources, contacts and advice will also be provided.

Rationale

Teacher generated materials are essential for democratizing EFL education, empowering teachers and further personalizing, developing and specializing the skills of EFL learners. Traditionally, however, this has been difficult to do as costs were prohibitive and publishers' main concerns tended to favor marketability over pedagogy.

With the decline of the dead tree medium of books, the digital age has ushered in a new era of media consumption and production. As anyone can now access, as well as produce information and content, there is both an abundance of resources and rubbish to sift through. For teachers, this means we are no longer bound by the traditional gate keepers of teaching materials and are now freer to create, customize and distribute our own materials. Media brokers in all areas are still coming to terms with this change and few are willing to give up the control afforded by traditional business models in favor of innovation, flexibility and freedom. Most major publishers still include CDs and DVDs with their texts even though most students and teachers have evolved beyond this medium. Why can't textbook materials be available on YouTube or audio files be downloaded from linked websites? If you create your own materials they can be, and quite easily at that.

The situation with most publishers is either (a) they want to publish something in a huge quantity that fits every market, thereby yielding maximum profits. Or (b) they will publish

what you have created but require you to pre-purchase or agree to buy a certain percentage of the print run to cover their costs and reduce their risk. This either results in a vanity press or a mass production of something far different from what you originally intended. Teachers are the best judges of what their students need and therefore the solution is simple. Create your own textbook. Most teachers who don't use textbooks pass out handouts every week. This is very inefficient, time consuming and leaves the students without a sense of continuity or vision of learning outcomes. With a textbook created by their teacher, they know what to expect, the goals and lesson plans are clear and organized, they have a sense of pride in the class as the materials were created specifically for them and best of all, the teacher's preparation, photocopying or planning, are all done in advance.

Options
There are several options available for teachers ranging in cost and complexity. These include POD (print on demand), ebooks (Kindle, Kobo), ibooks (Apple), Amazon (Create space), or connecting with local printers (DTP or InterGraphica Press **www.intergraphicapress.com**).

Print on demand, POD is one of the more traditional forms of self-publishing. It usually involves direct contact with a printer or a contract with a publisher in which the author covers the costs or agrees to buy the entire print run. Many local publishers such as Naundo, Kinseido or Sebido apply hybrid forms of this model in which they agree to publish a book if the author buys a portion of the print run or pays for a percentage of the costs. This reduces the risk for publishers being stuck with unsold books and allows authors more freedom in developing their materials. However this method is quite expensive and complicated in that small print runs result in higher costs. Authors often have to edit and format their materials as well as being responsible for marketing distribution and sales.

Amazon provides a bridge service for POD in the form of Create Space, however this is not yet available in Japan and shipping from the U.S. is still not cost effective and can take up to three months to receive galley proofs. Digital printing through Kindle or ibooks is perhaps the most cost effective but can be difficult to market and distribute and also ranges significantly in complexity. Producing a Kindle book is easiest and costs nothing. Authors can determine their own price and Amazon will pay up to 70% of the royalties. The difficulty here is with distribution and practical application. Kindles are not interactive and not yet suited for textbook, in class or interactive usage. Apple's ibooks is by far the most innovative and definitely represents the future of publishing and textbooks. However it remains very complex in production and Apple requires strict control over distribution, usage and takes a large percentage of

any sales. Another option would be to create a textbook as an App however that would still require advanced programming as well as writing skills and would necessitate all students have Apple products.

The best option at present would be contacting local printers who also engage in micro publishing. These vary greatly in services, quality and cost. There are several available throughout Japan and a simple Google search will provide a viable list. Most local options require high level Japanese reading and writing ability in order to navigate submission websites and communicate with staff. A reasonable and efficient option in the Kanto area is InterGraphica Press (**www.intergraphicapress.com**). In terms of price, services, communication and quality they were a very positive experience. Small print runs of under 100 books can cost as little as 500 yen per unit for a 60+ page book with a full color cover and delivered to home and or school within 2 weeks.

Procedure
In order to produce a simple textbook for printing and publishing, teachers should follow a few basic guidelines. First organize your materials into clear categories, themes sections or chapters and create a table of contents. If you would like an ISBN number and have the book registered for sale in stores and online, check for copy protected materials. Make sure all pictures and graphics are either your own or you have obtained permission to use them. There are vast resources for stock photos available online. ISBN registration usually costs about 10,000 yen. Choose a format and layout that is easy to navigate, follows a logical pattern and reflects your students' needs and abilities. Short simple sections with lots of white space or graphics are best. Also be sure to provide clear instructions for exercises and activities, this will help the students build a positive impression of the book and cut down substantially on your in class explanation. Design an engaging and relevant cover with a simple and informative title. Something that the students can understand and relate to which also reflects the teaching or course goals. Consider your distribution options. Will you be selling the book yourself, through a University bookstore or through a distribution and marketing company such as Englishbooks.jp? In most cases you will also need to generate a barcode. This is often included with an ISBN but is available separately for about 3,000 yen. This decision strongly affects the business end of textbook production. Although the author is free to determine the unit price, you want to be able to cover your costs without ripping off your students. It is important to know that most book stores will take 10-20% off the cover price as their fee and often sell each book at a discount. Most distribution and marketing firms also take about 40-50%.You can keep these expenses down and create a lower priced book

if you sell it yourself directly to the students, however most universities don't approve of this method and sales generally have to go through the campus bookstore. Make sure you carefully consider all options and rules for your particular institution. Be sure to balance your price with production and distribution costs you don't want to be a charity but you also don't want to appear to be gauging your students either.

Finally, when you are ready to publish create a PDF of your manuscript. Check it carefully for formatting errors and that the pages line up. The printed version will appear exactly as the PDF. Most POD, ebook and local publisher/printers prefer PDF as the default format. If you use something else make sure to check with the company of your choice first.

Conclusion

In conclusion, producing a textbook is a rewarding and beneficial experience for all those involved. Any teacher who has created a folders worth of materials for a class has the resources and creativity available to produce an effective and relevant text. The bene-fits for students are continuity, consistency in materials and a clear idea of the aims and goals of the class. Teachers will cut down on their preparation time, have a valuable resource which directly reflects their classroom needs and goals as well as a publication of which they can be proud. In the same way that Guttenberg's printing press transformed his generation and changed the way information was exchanged, small scale, context specific, textbook production can empower teachers and students. The information age necessitates a more flexible approach to producing, consuming and distributing media, similarly textbook publishing needs to be reconsidered and influenced by the teacher's specific needs, requirements and experiences. There is no better way to democratize information and education than by creating your own materials, publishing them and distributing them to others with similar needs and interests.

Impromptu Presentations

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Learner level:high intermediate and above

Length of activity: 10-15 minutes approximately (can easily be varied)

Resources used: a pen and some paper for note taking

Goals: to practice specific presentation skills, observe other students using the same skills in different ways, to familiarize students with presenting and build experience (thereby reducing the stress of delivering presentations), increase class participation and collaboration with reflections, establish better continuity between classes

Preparation

Very little preparation on the part of the teacher is needed, as this task is primarily a review or practice exercise. No specific materials are needed other than perhaps a pen and some paper. One recommendation I have is that the teacher should choose a topic ahead of time that requires no re-search and that everyone can talk about with minimal preparation.

Procedure

1.First, teach a new presentation skill (importance of sweeping eye contact, how to answer different kinds of questions, the importance of stressing key words, pausing before or after delivering key points, doubling up on or repeating key words).

2.Put students in groups of three (four is better than two if necessary).

3.Give the class a topic to present on (something they do not need to research and can easily talk about after 2-3 minutes preparation). Remind them they do not have time to write a script or memorize what they want to say.

4.When the first person in each group stands up to talk, assign specific listening roles to the other two members. This entails not only just listening to what the speaker is saying but focusing on either the new skill that

they will attempt to demonstrate, or a culmination of previously learned skills.

After the speaker has finished (and sits down) they will get immediate feedback from their two partners as to how they did, specifically regarding the targeted skills. Step 4 is then repeated for the next two people in the group until everyone has had a turn presenting and listening for certain skills or tasks.

Options

1.Impromptu presentations can be utilized to practice various new presenting skills, to review previously learnt skills, or just simply to familiarize students with presenting in front of others. If you are using them for review, you can skip step 1 in the procedure section above, or you can have students review amongst themselves instead.

2.If you want to assess these presentations, it is possible to have groups of 4, and have the third member of the audience video the presentation for later evaluation. I don't personally recommend evaluating them as this defeats the purpose of having low-key and stress free presentations.

3.Impromptu presentations can also be done to add variety to an oral communication class in which stu-

dents typically begin class by discussing their weekend or latest news with a partner. Why not have them present it instead?

4.Impromptu presentations can be done at any time during the lesson.

Rationale

Oral presentations are an integral part of life for university students (Gretz et al., 2009) and being able to successfully deliver one can significantly determine one's success in the academic world and in the working world (Feklyunina & Grebenyuk, 2004; Stowe et al., 2011). Presentations are also often rated the most stressful and demanding task faced by students (Joughin, 2007). This is especially true for language learners who have to overcome the stress and difficulty of delivering a presentation while doing so in a second language. Impromptu presentations can help alleviate many of these issues. They can ease stress levels by helping students become more experienced with presenting, and they can help to draw attention to the many smaller tasks that go into delivering a successful presentation. They can also promote more classroom participation and collaboration, as well as an increase in information processing speed by students (Thompson et al., 2012).

When compared to other important academic skills, such as essay writing, oral discussions, or critical reading assignments, students often get fairly few opportunities to deliver oral presentations. This lack of exposure and limited experience makes students nervous when presenting. When they do have the chance to deliver an oral presentation, they are usually evaluated and graded- making the experience even more stressful. Impromptu presentations can provide students with experience delivering presentations, more frequently and without the stress of being evaluated.

By keeping the goal small and by just focusing on a specific task within the presentation, impromptu presentations can also help alleviate the stress felt by students. These specific tasks could be simply trying to make sure their eye contact is good, or by asking a good rhetorical question at the beginning of their presentation. By mastering these smaller steps, one-by-one, they can build up their confidence. When it comes to delivering a presentation later on in the semester they will already be familiar with most of the smaller tasks they need to focus on and will have a better idea of how to put them all together and deliver a successful presentation.

Impromptu presentations can also foster a sense of unity among students from sharing feedback and by comparing different approaches to a task. As individual students each possess different strengths and weaknesses, impromptu presentations become a chance for others to view, learn from and incorporate these different skills and techniques into their own presentations. Ironically, the lack of preparation time becomes a convenient face-saving excuse and students quickly realize and accept that no one can deliver a perfect presentation. Without the pressure of a teacher watching on impromptu presentations can often become quite a fun exercise.

It can often be hard to establish a sense of continuity between classes, especially with classes that meet only once a week, but impromptu presentations can help with this by solidifying previously learnt skills and promoting frequent review. After several weeks of classes with impromptu presentations, students will usually come to expect them and will often revise certain skills ahead of time, in the anticipation that they will be part of the requirements of today's presentation.

Impromptu presentations offer many potential benefits for students

and can be used for a variety of purposes in the language classroom or in L1 classrooms, in university settings or elsewhere. Very little resources are necessary and with a little bit of training, students will come to view them as useful and even as enjoyable.

Caveats

Many students are fearful of presentations, so the first time you try doing impromptu presentations in the classroom, be prepared for some resistance and confusion. You can help to ease their concerns by stressing that it is just for practice and that there will be no assessment. Also point out that no one will be able to deliver a great presentation and that mistakes are okay. I often ask the students to give me a random topic to present on, with no time to prepare, and then have them evaluate and discuss how I did on certain tasks and skills. It is also important to remind students that presenting is not strictly a language exercise and that communicating their message or feeling is more important than getting the right tense or using the right article.

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Language-in-Education Policies and MEXT-approved EFL Textbooks in the New Course of Study

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Introduction

As former senior high school teachers, we anticipated with excitement the release of the first-year EFL textbooks for the newly revised Course of Study for Foreign Language. We wanted to see with our own eyes how the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) was going to reflect what many have seen as ambitious new changes to the senior high school English curriculum (Stewart, 2009; Yoshida, 2009), especially the reorganization of foreign language subjects as well as the requirement that classes be conducted in English (MEXT, 2011). We knew that in order for the objectives of the new curriculum to take place at the classroom level, the textbook would have to be a critical agent of change that would reflect these changes and provide teachers with the tools to realize and utilize them in their lessons.

However, as we have had the chances to examine some of the new textbooks, we noted that there was a wide variety in the interpretations of the Course of Study guidelines; while some books had made some adjustments clearly influenced by the new curriculum, others seemed not to be that much different from before. This perceived mismatch has been already noted in the literature in Japan (Gorsuch, 1999; Ogura, 2008; Humphries, 2011). However, with the new curriculum, we expected bigger changes. The fact that they were variable led us to question the role of materials development in language-in-education policy and the degree to which materials can actually reflect the goals of educational ministries, and the factors that may enhance or impede these goals. It was this main question that has inspired our current interest in the degree to which teach-

ing materials play a role in the policy-making process, and has inspired us to conduct our current research, which we presented at the 38th National JALT Conference on October 26th, 2013 in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan.

Conceptual Overview

We view language-in-education policy and planning as a complicated process in which macro policy objectives are translated – but not always neatly – to the local level, where they are to be implemented by teachers in classrooms (see Chua and Baldauf, 2011 for more on language policy translation). The translation of language-in-education policy into practice is affected by the involvement of several actors in the policymaking process: policymakers, curriculum developers, principals, department heads and teachers, Similar to Zhang and Adamson (2006) as well as Adamson and Davison (2003), we see the translation process as complex and involving several stages, as displayed in the diagram below:

There are several levels of policy formulation as seen below where processes (policymaking, materials design, school decision-making and teachers lesson planning) lead to products (framework, syllabus and textbooks, curriculum projects and teaching acts). Our concern is with the processes and products created under the *resourced curriculum,* where textbooks and textbook syllabi are created (found in the textbooks accepted by the MEXT through the textbook approval process). However, as we discussed in our presentation, the lack of coherence between these levels of curricula has the potential to mitigate the intended effects of the initial directives.

Presentation Focus

In our presentation, "MEXT-approved textbooks and the new Course of Study" we sought to compare the newly released textbooks with texts from the previous Course of Study (implemented in 2003) in order to contrast the degree to which they align with curriculum objectives. We examined the new subjects and the composition of the associated textbooks and compared them to text-
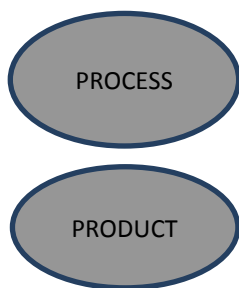
	Intended Curriculum	Resourced Curriculum	Adopted Curriculum	Enacted Curriculum
PROCESS	Policymaking	Materials Design	School Decision Making	Teachers Lesson Planning
PRODUCT	Curriculum Framework	Syllabus, Textbooks And Teachers Resources	Curriculum Projects	Teaching Acts
(Adapted from Adamson & Davison, 2003; Zhang & Adamson, 2006)				

books from the previous curriculum. We also looked at the objectives of each of the subjects in both the new curriculum as well as the previous one and determined the extent to which the textbook reflected the objectives. Our approach has been inspired by several authors in materials and curriculum development ,(Graves, 2000; Kennedy & Tomlinson, 2013) as well as the role of language teaching methods in language-in-education policy and planning (Liddicoat, 2004).

The textbooks we chose were from the subjects English I, Writing and Oral Communication 1 from the previous curriculum, and English Communication I, English Expression I and English Conversation from the new curriculum. We selected textbooks that were ranked high in terms of market share based on data that we have from a well-known source. We analysed the content, organization as well as the degree to which the textbooks reflected the goals of the subjects.

Findings & Discussion

We found that while notable discrepancies existed between the textbooks and the objectives of the previous curriculum, the new textbooks make incremental strides towards alignment. In bullet points below, we provide brief summaries of our findings for space considerations:

- Crown (English 1 and English Communication 1): these textbooks tended to have a conservative interpretation of *Course of Study* objectives. The new textbooks do not make any drastic changes. Though both curricula intend to develop students' basic ability to communicate through the four macro-skills, the predominant exercises centre on grammar and translation.
- Hello There (Aural/Oral Communication 1 and English Conversation): The same publisher has released this textbook for both subjects. No difference between the textbooks except for layout. The English Conversation subject suggests that students need to be able to "hold conversations."
- Element (Writing)– The Element textbook has writing tasks geared primarily at the sentential level rather than for communicative purposes, which does not align with the subject's intentions to write according to the situation and the purpose.
- Vision Quest (English Expression 1) – A creative hybrid textbook that attempts to balance the need for grammatical sentences as well as communicative activities.

Overall, our results show that except for Vision Quest textbook, the textbooks have not translated these changes as they were intended. This suggests that other forces are at work, specifically creating textbooks

that are closely aligned with the university entrance exams.

Our findings show that the curriculum objectives as intended have not translated into the resourced curriculum as neatly as one may expect. The textbooks examined are conservative in how they interpret the guidelines of the Course of Study. Clearly textbook publishers have to make compromises when producing materials in response to policy changes. Profits from the textbooks are of the upmost importance. Another implication is how teachers use the textbook and supplement them to compensate for where the textbooks have shortcomings. This could be problematic, as some teachers may not have the knowledge and skills to create materials to lessen the gap between the activities in the textbooks and the content of the Course of Study.

Conclusion

Our presentation discussed how the objectives and content of the Course of Study is seen in six MEXT-approved textbooks. As a whole, we found that the textbooks were lacking and improvements should be made to have better translate the objectives. MEXT (2011b) states, "it is essential to improve the quality and quantity of school textbooks, which play an important role in children's learning as the primary educational materials for school subjects. MEXT therefore ensure that they comply with the new Courses of Study." MEXT clearly thinks that the textbooks need to be better aligned with the Courses of

Study. We will just have to wait and see.

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Appendix

Subjects and Objectives (Previous Course of Study 1999)	
English 1	To develop students' basic abilities to understand what they listen to or read and to convey information, ideas etc. by speaking or writing in English and to foster a positive attitude towards communication toward communication through dealing with everyday topics (MEXT, 2002, p. 111)
Aural/ Oral Communication 1	To develop students' basic abilities to understand and convey information, ideas, etc. by listening to or speaking English and to foster a positive attitude towards communication through dealing with everyday topics (MEXT, 2002)
Writing	To further develop students' abilities to write down information, ideas, etc. in English in accordance with the situation and the purpose, and to foster a positive attitude toward communicating by utilizing these abilities (MEXT, 2002, p. 112).
Subjects and Objectives (New Course of Study 2009)	
Communication English 1	To develop students basic abilities such as accurately understanding and appropriately conveying information ideas etc. while fostering a positive attitude toward communicating through the English language (MEXT, 2011, p.1)
English Conversation	To develop students' abilities to hold conversations on everyday topics, while fostering a positive attitude toward communication through the English language (MEXT, 2011, p.1)
English Expression 1	To develop students' abilities to evaluate facts, opinions, etc. from multiple perspectives and communicate through reasoning and a range of expression, while fostering a positive attitude toward communication through English (MEXT, 2001, p. 2).

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On the Inside

The Materials Writers SIG is dedicated to continually raising the standards in the creation of language teaching materials, in all languages and in all media, whether for general consumption or for individual classroom use. The editors encourage participation from colleagues using new media or teaching languages other than English.

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